

REMARKS

The Office Action dated April 7, 2008, has been received and carefully noted. The foregoing amendment and following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response to the issues raised by the Office Action.

Claim 1 is amended to more particularly point out and claim the subject matter of the invention. The amendments do not add new matter, and place the claims in immediate condition for allowance. Claim 8 is rewritten into independent form in light of the indication of the allowable subject matter contained therein. Thus, claims 1-8 are pending in the present application, and are respectfully submitted for reconsideration.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 8.

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,249,482 (Harr) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0043217 A1 (Rivard). Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Harr in view of Rivard, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,743,281 (Miller). Applicant respectfully traverses the obviousness rejections of claims 1-7, and submits that the cited references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all the elements of any of the presently pending claims.

Turning to the present invention, the laboratory breeding device recited in the claims is provided with a large number of breeding cages. Each breeding cage comprises a cage body with its upper part opened and a cover covering the open portion on the upper part. When the cover is mounted on the cage body, the inside of the breeding cage communicates with the outside air only through an air supply device and an air exhaust device.

The air supply device and the air exhaust device are mounted on the cover. The air supply device comprises a fan filter unit. The fan filter unit is provided with a fan device driven by electric power, and a first filter.

As mentioned above, because the individual breeding cage is constructed with the cage body and the cover mounted thereon, the cover is provided with the air supply device and the air exhaust device. The fan filter unit of the air supply device is provided with the electrically-driven fan device, such that each individual breeding cage forms an independent barrier by itself. As a result, the individual breeding cage may be loaded on a breeding rack with power supplied to the fan device from a power source of a laboratory animal breeding room so as to operate the fan device. The breeding cage itself can take in air in the laboratory animal breeding room while cleaning it. The air in the breeding cage is filtered by a second filter and exhausted into the laboratory animal breeding room. Thus, there is no need to provide means for supplying clean air into the breeding cage at the rack.

In addition, in the laboratory breeding device of the present invention, because the individual breeding cage itself forms an independent barrier, one may place a battery close to the breeding cage so as to supply power from the battery to the fan device of the air supply device and to drive it. This feature provides an advantage in that the breeding cage with an animal inside can be removed from the rack and transferred and transported to another location.

On the other hand, Harr describes a rack device for storing the breeding cage that does not disclose or suggest all the features recited in claim 1. The rack device of Harr has a breeding cage 68 with its upper part open, the cage suspended below horizontal shelves 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 with hollow insides. Air passing through the inside of the horizontal shelves is supplied to the breeding cage, and the air in the breeding cage is returned to the inside of the horizontal shelves. As such, Harr

does not disclose or suggest the electrically-driven fan device in each breeding cage. Further, the individual breeding cage does not form an independent barrier by itself as in the laboratory breeding device disclosed by the present invention.

Moreover, Rivard and Miller fail to disclose or suggest an air supply device having the electrically-driven fan device as in the breeding cage in the laboratory breeding device recited in the claims. Rivard relates to animal caging and biological storage systems. Miller relates to an air filtration indicator. Neither reference discloses nor suggests using a fan device in a breeding cage, wherein the fan device is driven by electric power. The structures shown in Rivard and Miller, therefore, are remarkably distinguishable from those disclosed by the present invention, and do not provide the features of claim 1 missing from Harr.

As mentioned above, the claims recite subject matter that is remarkably distinguishable from the teachings of Harr. Moreover, referring to the teachings of Harr and considering the teachings of Rivard and Miller, applicant submits that one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine reference teachings.

Thus, for at least these reasons, applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claim 1. Applicant also submits that claims 2-7, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons.

In view of the reasons provided above, applicant respectfully submits that Harr, Rivard and Miller, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all the features of claims 1-7. Thus, applicant respectfully requests that the obviousness rejections be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Because the claims are allowable over the cited references, applicant respectfully requests that the present application be passed to allowance and a Notice of Allowance issued. Claim 8 is allowable by reason of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Claims 1-7 are allowed by virtue of the amendments and arguments presented above.

Applicant respectfully submits that all issues raised by the Office Action have been addressed by the foregoing amendments and remarks.

If any further issues need addressing, applicant invites the Examiner to contact, by telephone, the applicants' undersigned attorney to expedite the disposition of the application.

Applicant believes no fees are due upon the filing of this Response.

Respectfully submitted,

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